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ABSTRACT

This bulletin presents news and opinions of the staff of Project Brave of the St. John Valley in northern Maine. Included in this issue are reports on the theme of the meeting of the National Council of Teachers of English in 1972, news of the implementation of a bilingual program, a discussion of the importance of self-concept in children, reasons for teaching reading at home, and many photographs of activities at Project Brave. The text of the bulletin is in English, with one poem in French. (SK)

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PROJECT BRAVE

BULLETIN

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH,
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"The Coulombes" — Linda, Gary and Kurt

PELLETIER'S STUDIO
507 Main Street
Madawaska, Maine

That each child may learn who he is, what he is,
and what he may become — what it is, in fact,
to be a full human being.

Margaret Mead

SPONSORED BY TITLE VII ESEA

St. John Valley, Maine

Vol. III, No. 7

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ST. JOHN VALLEY BILINGUAL EDUCATION
TITLE VII STAFF

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A REFLECTION OF THE 62nd ANNUAL MEETING OF THE
NATIONAL COUNCIL OF TEACHERS OF ENGLISH - NOVEMBER, 1972



I think that what we are talking about and suffering from today is the enormous number of breaks between almost all of our students and the pieces of tradition and the past that we try to give them because of the breaks that are in us . . . If we want people to be full human beings, we want them to have as much participation as they — as individuals with a certain kind of mind, a certain kind of imagination, a certain kind of imagery — are capable of. We want to be sure that we didn't ignore the particular sense that they could use best. If they're auditory and they've been taught only to read, they will miss something forever in their lives.

When one looks at a primitive tribe in New Guinea, before we've had contact with them, they have dignity, they have a great sense that they understand all that is to be understood in the world. They know, of course, that there are an enormous number of unexplainable things. But the things that they have thought about and members of their group have thought about, they understand. They have no sense of impairment until they come in contact with others who begin to give them a sense of insufficiency. Now, the whole history of the human race in the last 20,000 years has been the history of people who knew more, demeaning people who knew less.

In turning individuals who were members of isolated, proud groups — with their own poetry, their own art, their own religious beliefs — into people who were ignorant, we turned the preliterate people into illiterate people. We turned people who were the proud possessors of their whole tradition into people who know nothing.

If we can provide immediate human links between anything that we talk to other people about or introduce into our conversation when we are talking to them, they then do not know that they did not know that. It becomes immediately part of themselves.

I worked with primitive people in New Guinea in 1928 who had no calendar and merely counted from moon to moon and backward to the time of their grandfather and forward to the time of their grandchild. When I went back 25 years later, they'd had a cultural revolution, and they had learned to handle a very large amount of our material. They handled dates perfectly. They would have been the delight of any investigating committee holding teachers accountable. They were keeping notices, a beautiful diary of what went on in the village. And so I said, "How do you know that today is September 3, 1953?" They said, "Because yesterday was September 2." And I said, "How do you know it's 1953?" And they said, "Because last year was 1952." Now, they had started counting in 1946, which was the beginning of their new age. They could go back to 1946 and no further. I said, "How do you know it was 1946?" They said, "Because the Europeans told us so." Now these were intelligent people. They had known and worked out their ages and arranged them in approximate decades so they could tie themselves as living people into this time scale.

Then I came back and looked at our school system and at what we do. Children come to school, and the teachers writes on the board, "Today is September 3, 1972," with no explanation whatsoever, in most cases, that the next day is September 4, and the next day

is September 5. If it doesn't make sense to them at home; if we took the trouble to find out, we'd find that nobody told them at home either.

I think what we're talking about — when we say that it's harder to teach children, it's harder to get them interested in the things they ought to be interested in, it's harder to make the things that have meant so much in our past meaningful to them — is that there are endless breaks in what we do, and we have no way of connecting the child with these things and at the same time preserving the proper proportions.

People who are enjoying reading are now reading in a way that no human being will ever read again. And I think it's terribly important to realize this, because those of us who grew up before TV, radio, movies, or color reproduction of pictures, learned to read and from those squiggles on that page to build up magnificent visions. We constructed landscapes, constructed personalities, knew just how they looked, so if we ever saw an illustration later we were absolutely affronted because we knew they didn't look like that. This ability to reconstruct from a book to a degree is gone, because children, from the time they grow up, see what is happening, every sort of thing happening, and we've steadily been altering people's ability to read.

The full human being is a person who feels related to all of the past that we know about, to the present that we know about, and to the future that is to come. This doesn't mean, you know, that he has to have read Dante, but he has to have lived in a world where if Dante was mentioned, he was mentioned as something he could have read, by someone who has read it, and who didn't merely learn to pass some examination in "who was Dante" without ever having read a line of it and to pass that information along as a bunch of undigested, meaningless statements.

I think it's terribly important in all our teaching of literature that somehow we find a way to reconnect the children, the students that we teach directly and immediately, to whatever it is we're going to teach. One of the points about McGuffey's old reader — and I suppose there are people here who had plenty of suffering over it — is that the people who taught it knew what was in it and liked it. And that meant a great deal to the children.

(There) is a children's camp where they make a whole by putting together different kinds of disturbed and hurt children to care for each other: they take a very seriously crippled, blind, deaf child with one leg and no arms and they take disturbed, delinquent, sadistic children — children that you wouldn't dare leave alone with a dog or a cat — and put them together. The disturbed children take care of the crippled children and lead the blind children around, and everybody becomes human.

I want to go a little further with this analogy. In every group of students today, we have the most extraordinarily discrepant experiences, unbelievable experiences. Every time I go around a class of 20 students and ask them to tell about their lives back to their grandparents, I wonder at the end of the discussion why they can talk to each other at all. It seems absolutely phenomenal — they're sitting around a table, or in what is called a discipline, and they know a vocabulary. Heaven knows what the words mean to each of them. Only by putting each of their lives together can we create something in that class that is a whole.

Margaret Mead
Anthropologist and Author

ON BEING A FULL HUMAN BEING

The theme for NCTE Convention 1972 was in keeping with a longtime central concern of the Council: "That each child may learn who he is, what he is, and what he may become — what it is, in fact, to be a full human being." In the opening session of the Convention, both Virginia Reid, Council president, and Margaret Mead, from whose writings the theme was taken, addressed their remarks to the responsibility adults have for restructuring a world in which children may fully actualize their humanity.

If we have not actually fallen in, some of us have been shoved by pressures to accelerate the transfer of knowledge. "Start them earlier, teach them sooner, teach them more, more, more, in spite of the rate of knowledge doubling every seven years or less."

And is Piaget wrong, after all? Can we skip what Piaget identifies as crucial stages in conceptual growth? And if we cannot, but skip these steps nevertheless, what is the total cost to the child? . . .

(Christopher Jencks) argues (in his controversial study, *Inequality*) that the country is wrong to judge its schools as if they were factories turning a raw material (children) into an end product (employable adults); rather, schools should be seen as families which offer a certain kind of lifestyle . . .

If, then, we view the schools as families, we should expect them to be just as diverse as families are. Margaret Mead, . . . in the book *Family*, has described for us how diverse families can be and that there is no single model for an ideal family, but also whatever this family model says, it carries the pattern for the next generation and sets its imprint of expectation on the growing children. What their parents have achieved, they may achieve; where their parents have failed in their realization of a good life, they may succeed. And even though the family pattern may be broken as a result of separation, divorce, death, or disaster, the child growing up in his family is given both in irrevocable sense of the individual's full humanity and a sense of the potentialities for depth and range in human relationships. . .

If, then, the schools are to be like families, let them be families in which children:

1. Have an opportunity to learn from one another.
2. Are not asked what will you be when you grow up, but rather, who are you now? And who would you like to be next? And how can we help you become that?
3. Are encouraged like Jonathan Seagull to fly higher, not to compete with his fellow birds but to know no limits and so begin his race to learn.
4. Have time with an adult who also has time for them. (I am truly concerned with the increase in class sizes, and still the elementary teacher in most schools does not have a preparation period.)
5. Have adults who are more interested in what children say than in how they say it.
6. Are nurtured by good books, music, art, as well as by good food and fellowship, or as you say it, Miss Mead — "Families in which children perceive themselves and others as full human beings."

Virginia M. Reid
Mills College, California

"La souris des villes et la souris des champs"

Students of Mrs. Alphena Ayotte's third grade of St. Thomas School, Madawaska, enacted for students and parents, a French skit entitled "La souris des villes et la souris des champs."

The students illustrated the entire story on large cardboards which formed the back-drop for the play and helped supplement for the props. These third graders also made their own cardboard hats for the skit.

The third grade boys sang "Sur la route de Berthier," with solo verses.

"La leçon de bonté" was recited to perfection by Michael Michaud.

The girls were on stage next with a folk dance to the traditional French favorite, "Sur le pont d'Avignon." This dance was followed by a duet, "Meunier tu dors," sung by Lynn Gagnon and Cynthia Standing.

The final seasonal caption was a lovely Easter Dance entitled "Strolling Down the Street Easter Morning."



"A Bouquet of Spring Flowers"

A musical and dramatic production was staged by Mrs. Linda Palmer's first graders of St. Thomas School, Madawaska.



"Mother's Day Tea"

Mothers are hosted by the kindergarten students of St. Thomas School and their teacher, Mrs. Theresa Thibeault and aide, Mrs. Joyce Crosby.



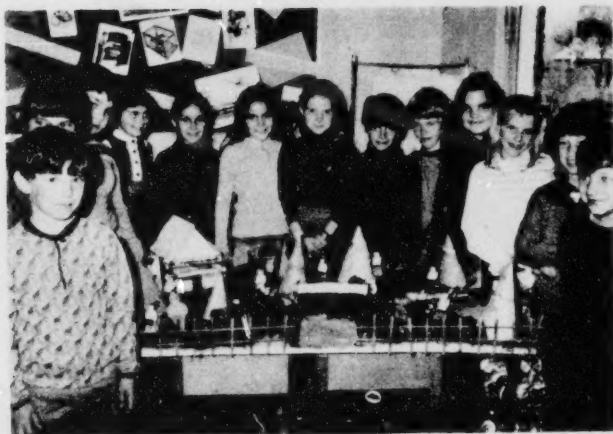
(upper left) Third grade students of Evangeline School, Madawaska, pose before drawings they made after a field trip to Fort Kent.



(upper right) The same class of students review the names of animals in French.



(right) Students take part in a reading lesson with Mrs. Adrien Gagnon.



These third grade students of Dr. Levesque School, Upper Frenchville, proudly display the Acadian village which they constructed under the guidance of Mrs. Claudette Violette and Mrs. Blanche Guerrette.

IMPLEMENTING A BILINGUAL PROGRAM IN S.A.D. #24

by Lorraine Berube



Title VII has now been successfully in progress in S.A.D. #24 for three years. The progress of this project has demonstrated realistic and effective results: children are progressing very well in all subjects; they have become more proficient and fluent in French and in English; they have developed an understanding and respect for their Acadian culture. Consequently, this understanding and respect has led to a more positive self-image and better social and personal adjustment.

The beauty of the Bilingual Program is that it uses the mother tongue as a basis of strength for learning.

Since children and parents have responded so positively toward the program, efforts are being made to implement it in all the classrooms from kindergarten to fifth grade next fall. As a result of the Instructional Development Institute that was held in Van Buren in March, a committee on Bilingual Education was formed. This committee has been meeting weekly to discuss how to best implement a Bilingual Program for all children K to 5th grade in S.A.D. #24. The following steps have been taken:

- 1) The French objectives developed through Title VII were studied and evaluated. Consequently, in August, each team representative will meet with their team members to implement these objectives in the classroom. In the event that a classroom be without a bilingual teacher, the team will organize their program so that every child will be exposed to the French objectives through team teaching.
- 2) A meeting is scheduled for before the end of the school year to inform the teachers of non-Title VII classrooms of the Bilingual Program, explain the materials Dr. Dube has written, and share activities that teachers have already developed.
- 3) A meeting with the Advisory Council will be held in June to inform the parents of the steps being taken to implement this program.
- 4) Consultants and resource people of the Title VII office will be consulted in implementing this program.
- 5) Information will be disseminated to all levels of the elementary school, as we have as participants of this committee a French teacher from Junior High and one from the intermediate level. This information will be important not only for better communication between these levels but also for better continuous progress.

We are hopeful that with these combined efforts a true Bilingual Program will develop, one that isn't limited to a block of time during the day but one in which its effect will transpire throughout the day.

Let us continue, the glow has already begun to appear in our educational system — the glow of a truly bilingual education.

"CARIBOU STUDENTS VISIT THE VALLEY"



The first grade students from Caribou are hosted by Miss Martine Pelletier's first grade students at St. John School. Interest is high as they socialize and share.



Caribou students with Mrs. Gail Dufour and aide, Mrs. Christine Theriault, and parent volunteers, pose before the Museum in St. David.



Miss Bernette Albert explains the artifacts of the Museum to the children.



Handmade toys capture the interest of these children.



Next, the U.S. Customs Office is visited. Children were fascinated here. Last on their tour was St. Basile, Canada.



Third grade students of Keegan School, Van Buren, express their creative talents as they take part in craft activities. Their teacher, Mrs. Theresa Cyr, oversees the project.



This same class of third grade students sew puppets under the guidance of Mrs. Priscilla Dufour.



Mrs. Antoinette Deschaine's third grade students of Keegan School, proudly display the lovely birdhouses which they constructed.

THE CHILD'S PERCEPTION OF SELF SHAPES HIS DESIRE TO ACHIEVE

by Sr. Jeannette Roy



Inherent in the Title VII philosophy is the belief that a child's success in learning is highly dependent upon that child's self-concept. A person's beliefs about himself will either keep him at his task and stimulate further growth and interest or they will foster a "cannot do" attitude as in the case with a negative image. The program has shown great interest in helping the students toward building a positive self-image.

Success-oriented objectives are an important part of the Title VII program. The students are asked to tell how they feel, what they see, and think through drawings, motions, music and writing. For example, after listening to a piece of music, a child is asked to tell us how the music makes him feel or to relate his feeling through motions or drawings. In any of the activities related to music, drama, art, or creative writing, a child will succeed, for there are no definite answers. The child's answer is always accepted.

The Title VII program makes use of materials which take into account the child's environment and native language. The materials used in the development of the French language are based on the child's culture, such as: slides on points of local interests and importance; booklets on "Chez-nous: ma famille," "Chez-nous: mon village," "Mon pays: Frenchville-St. Agatha," "Mon pays: Madawaska," "Mon pays: Van Buren," "La Forêt," and "L'Eglise." All of these provide opportunities for acceptance and use of the native language, self-expression and knowledge of local culture.

The system of evaluation adopted by the project provides the teacher with additional knowledge of each child's strengths and weaknesses — thereby allowing the teacher to focus on the child's strength and at the same time meet each child's needs. The evaluation program includes:

- a. Diagnostic tests which provide the teacher with each child's strengths and weaknesses in various areas such as reading, listening, vocabulary, etc.
- b. Pre-tests which indicate where a child is at academically at the beginning of the school year.
- c. Post-tests which indicate the progress made by the child during the school year.
- d. Periodical checks on various objectives which indicate to both the child and teacher the accomplishment of certain objectives.

Various workshops, courses and classroom visits made by the French and English coordinators are attempts at creating in teachers an acceptance and better knowledge of self.

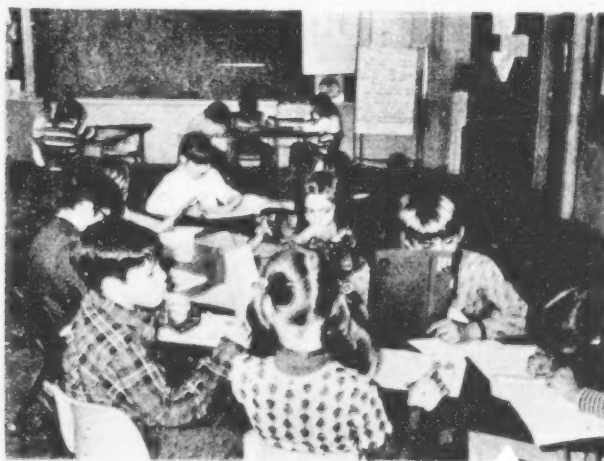
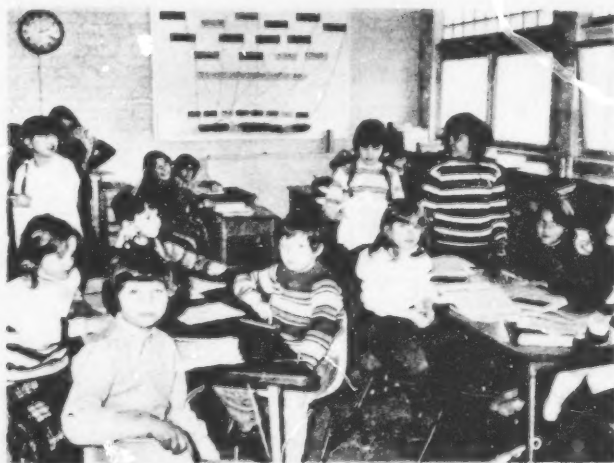
Since the area of feeling and attitude toward self is an intangible and changing one, its results are not easily measured. It is, therefore, difficult to say with accuracy what actual impact instruction has on the students' self-concept. However, if recent research is accurate, the concern and efforts shown and put into action by the entire Title VII staff cannot but contribute to the development of the child's positive self-concept.

COMMUNICATION, COMMUNICATIONS



Students of Dr. Levesque School, Upper Frenchville, experiment in varied types of communications. In the upper photos an experimental telephone (loaned by Bell Telephone Company) helps children learn telephone manners and procedures.

Students in the opposite photo communicate by the art work they produce for the classroom bulletin board.



In the lower photos, written communication is accentuated as students perfect their skills in spelling by using the Continuous Progress in Spelling Lab.



Movement to music provides diversion for third grade students
of Mrs. Mabel Plourde, Montfort School, St. Agatha.



"MOTHER GOOSE CONCERT"

What joy there is in producing a concert! Judge for
yourself by the expressions on the faces of these first grade
students of Mrs. Terry Ouellette and Mrs. Barbara Kavanagh of
Montfort School, St. Agatha

PERHAPS READING SHOULD BE TAUGHT IN THE HOME

(by Cynthia Parsons, Portland Sunday Telegram)

Margaret Mead recently startled 1,500 lunch companions during the annual meeting of the National Association of Independent Schools. She suggested that reading might best be taught at home.

She argued that the present system of a partially trained teacher working with 30 illiterate pupils results in failure of a significant number of pupils to learn to read. Since her audience knew that several children in each first grade class do, indeed, not learn to read, she drew an appreciative response. But her suggestion that children learn to read at home as they learn how to walk and talk met clenched-teeth silence.

What about this startling idea?

Dr. Mead was serious. She did not make the suggestion in jest. Also, she claimed there would not be any more failures in learning to read by shifting the responsibility to the home than there now are when the burden falls on the schools.

Schools used to claim that only they could teach reading. They often sent word home that parents were not to give the children any help or instruction in beginning reading. But that is a thing of the past. The popular United States television program, "Sesame Street," put such a notion quite out of business. Although this TV show does not carry direct instruction in beginning reading, it does a great deal of what is called "reading readiness."

What if we were to call for more TV programs with instruction in reading, make reading workbooks and textbooks available, offer adult education courses in how to teach reading, and drop the teaching of reading from the school curriculum?

It's certainly worth a try.

Better educated neighbors might find ways to help those few parents in each community who do not, themselves, know how to read. Perhaps the American Association of University Women and similar organizations could hold classes on reading readiness and beginning reading instruction for the children of illiterate parents.

Public television could do its part by offering literacy lessons for adults and reading lessons for small children. Direct instruction in phonics, spelling, vocabulary, word recognition, paragraph meaning, speed reading, and comprehension could be offered at suitable hours for viewing and studying.

THE SAVING IN money for any community could be significant. With virtually every child receiving individual tutoring instead of class teaching, there would be almost no need for schools to staff more than one or two reading teachers.

Instead, the schools could concentrate on subjects, such as the new math, that are not easily taught at home. Placement of children in multi-age groups would be the norm rather than the exception. Schools could foster the play writing and acting, debating and other group experiences that single families cannot easily provide. Children would go to school for intellectual refreshment. They would use their home-taught reading skills to complete research assignments and to be stimulated by a community of scholars.

Perhaps Dr. Mead has found a workable solution to a failure of the schools — a solution that would cost less, not more, public money.

Wouldn't it be grand if several towns and cities were to try it out?

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

The following letter was addressed to Mr. Jack Michaud, a member of the Title VII Advisory Board.

B. Helene Erskine
312 STATE STREET
PRESQUE ISLE, MAINE 04769

PROFESSIONAL TUTORING
SPECIALIZING IN MATHEMATICS

December 21, 1972

CERTIFIED MAINE TEACHER
B. S. DEGREE
TELEPHONE 782-6021

Dear Jack,

We have just finished our first semester of French 1, and are relieved of classes for a whole month! This gives me the chance I've been looking for all these weeks to send my special message of thanks to you.

I've been DELIGHTED with that material you have been sending down to me. I learn a surprising amount from it, but besides that I have such fun with it! I'll be working my way through a translation of a little story and burst right out laughing. The stories and descriptions are so cute, and they often are quite humorous. When you offered me this material you rather apologetically said that it would be very elementary level; kindergarten and the first three grades are considered elementary level; but, believe me, it's advanced to us! As with any person who is trying to learn a different language, the great number of words and speech forms seem impossible to me. I want so very much to be able to speak French, but I can hardly believe I ever shall. I can read it, and write it, reasonably well, but I flunk out when it comes to talking. I'm not going to stop trying, though.

I've browsed through the explanatory booklet a number of times in order to better understand the project, and the program. All of you---members of the advisory council, of board of directors, of the various staffs, the supervisors, the teachers--- are to be very highly commended. This is a fantastic program. I not only have admiration for it, but I find great happiness in knowing that the little ones of French ancestry will not lose their native language. I regard it as a very musical, rhythmic, beautiful language, and it should be preserved rather than lost in the process of education. These children will also learn the correct way to use the English language. The end result will be two languages, wellspoken and easily spoken, instead of one that's more or less a regional improvisation. The Valley people have a beautiful heritage. They are folks of fine character, and gentleness, and they have good minds. I am always very glad when I learn of projects undertaken to show and preserve this heritage. It delights me to read in the news of a museum, concert, or a movie---or slides---on locale, and you know, don't you, that Dick sent down to me the record "Noel In The Valley"? It is absolutely lovely.

A very special word of praise is due those who are the authors of the booklets. They do a BEAUTIFUL job. It's hard to believe that such talent can be so close to home.

Finalement, je veux vous remercier encore une fois des excellents livres de français que vous m'avez envoyés. Roger et moi, nous les comprenons assez bien, et peut-être quelquefois nous pourrions parler de français avec tout le monde de Fort Kent...et Madawaska!

Amitiés,

Helene

LES BOURGS DE LA VALLEE

J'habite une vallée
Toute parée de fleurs et de verdure
Au plus beau de l'été;
Où les cristaux de neige font la parure
Des hivers étoilés.

Le soir, dans les bourgs de la Vallée.
Les jeunes gamins
Voient les amoureux,
Amants douxereux,
Se tenir la main.
Car les soirs sont tous faits pour s'aimer.

J'habite une vallée
Qui ensoleille, aux heures du printemps,
Du matin la rosée;
Fait de pluie, de couleurs et de vent
A l'automne des années.

Le soir, dans les bourgs de la Vallée,
Les jeunes gamins
Voient les amoureux,
Amants douxereux,
Se tenir la main.
Car les soirs sont tous faits pour s'aimer.

J'habite une vallée
Où les jeunes amants de tous les jours
Ont le temps de s'aimer;
Où une seule silhouette faisant l'amour
Dépeint l'éternité.

Le soir, dans les bourgs de la Vallée,
Les jeunes gamins
Voient les amoureux,
Amants douxereux,
Se tenir la main.
Car les soirs sont tous faits pour s'aimer.

Normand C. Dubé

